

August 7, 2014



**A recommendation to the Bryan City Council regarding a proposed change to
the membership of a Design Review Board**

BACKGROUND:

The Planning and Zoning Commission discussed the issue of establishing building design standards in-depth between March 2010 and March 2012. The proposed ordinance that would establish such standards also includes provisions for the creation of a new City Council-appointed Design Review Board, which would be charged with hearing appeals to administrative decisions regarding a proposed design, or to authorize variances from the adopted design standards. Commissioners had recommended that this new citizen board be comprised of seven members. The following language was recommended to be added to the Code of Ordinances concerning the Design Review Board:

Sec. 2-410. Membership.

The Design Review Board is composed of seven members appointed by city council for a three year term with a maximum of one reappointment for a total of six continuous years. Appointments shall be made by place. In the case of vacancies on the board, the city council shall appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of that term. The unexpired term does not apply when calculating service for the maximum service of six years.

Sec. 2-411. Qualifications.

(a) The Design Review Board shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) Two members currently serving as Planning & Zoning Commissioners;
- (2) Three registered architects.
- (3) A contractor or builder; and
- (4) A commercial developer.

(b) All members should be residents of Brazos County, and reside within the City of Bryan if possible. All members must have knowledge of the architectural, cultural, social, economic, ethnic or political history of the city. No one business shall constitute a majority membership on the board.

Sec. 2-412. Duties and functions.

- (a) Hold public hearings, hear appeals, authorize variances, and take other actions concerning design matters as authorized by ordinance;
- (b) Make recommendations to and advise the City Council on matters involving building design standards and building design guidelines; and
- (c) Establish policies and procedures of the Design Review Board.

On July 8, 2014, the City Council considered the ordinance for adoption. Following the public hearing, Councilmembers unanimously voted to introduce the ordinance as presented, with an amendment that the Design Review Board be comprised of only four members: two members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, one registered architect, and one contractor, builder or commercial developer. Councilmembers stated that it may be difficult to find seven citizen volunteers for this new board and to get their schedules to align to have a meeting. The change is intended to allow for a faster turnaround, while still providing the professional expertise required from its members. After discussion, Councilmembers voted to refer the proposed ordinance amendment back to the Planning and Zoning Commission for its recommendation and feedback.

OPTIONS:

Commissioners may recommend:

1. to keep the number of proposed members on the Design Review Board at seven, as previously recommended by the Commission; or
2. to agree to City Council's proposed change to reduce the membership on the Design Review Board to four (two members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, one registered architect, and one contractor, builder or commercial developer); or
3. a new Design Review Board make-up.

A Design Review Board with less than seven members would also necessitate deleting the sentence "appointment shall be made by place" from proposed Section 2-410 of the proposed ordinance as there are seven members on the City Council.